

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 MCE-00 CIAE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 /078 W
-----097358 241736Z /45

P R 241217Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1313
SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
USMISSION USNATO
INFO USNMR SHAPE
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
CINC USAREUR HEIDELBERG
CINC USAFE RAMSTEIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 15426

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL MILI GW US
SUBJECT: GERMAN OFFICIAL COMMENTS ON AWACS PROSPECTS

REF: BONN 13438

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1. A SENIOR GERMAN DEFENSE MINISTRY OFFICIAL HAS
REAFFIRMED THE LINK BETWEEN AWACS AND THE 120MM TANK
GUN, BUT HAS NOT SPOKEN OF OTHER LINKAGES AS HE HAD
EARLIER DONE (REFTEL).

2. HANS EBERHARD, HEAD OF THE DEFENSE MINISTRY'S
ARMAMENTS DIVISION, HAS TOLD THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR

THAT HE BELIEVED THE BUNDESTAG WOULD ACT ON AWACS THIS COMING FALL. HE SAID THE MOD HOPED THAT BUNDESTAG ACTION COULD BE COMPLETED AS EARLY AS OCTOBER SO THAT THERE COULD BE A COMMON ALLIANCE POSITION ON AWACS AT THE DECEMBER DPC.

3. EBERHARD SAID THAT THE CRUCIAL QUESTION REMAINED THE 120MM TANK GUN. HE SAID THE BUNDESTAG WOULD BE CLOSELY WATCHING THE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT COMMITTEE MIGHT ACT BY THE MIDDLE OF SEPTEMBER. IF IT DID, HE THOUGHT, AWACS WOULD BE QUICKLY RAISED IN THE BUNDESTAG. WHILE HE COULD NOT PROMISE POSITIVE ACTION, HE FELT THAT AN AMERICAN ACCEPTANCE OF THE TANK GUN WOULD PAVE THE WAY. OF COURSE, HE REITERATED THE STANDARD GERMAN VIEW THAT OUR FAILURE TO TAKE THE TANK GUN WOULD MAKE THE BUNDESTAG VERY NEGATIVE ON AWACS.

4. SPEAKING FURTHER ABOUT THE TANK GUN, EBERHARD OBSERVED THAT THE GUN WAS INCREASINGLY BEING ACCEPTED AROUND EUROPE. HE SAID IT WAS BEING PURCHASED BY THE FRENCH AND THE SWISS, AND HE ADDED THAT THE DUTCH WERE ALSO DISPOSED TO TAKE THE GERMAN GUN ALTHOUGH NO FINAL PARLIAMENTARY ACTION HAD BEEN TAKEN.

5. EBERHARD DID NOT REITERATE THE LINKAGE OF THE ETS
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OR THE ASDM ISSUES TO AWACS (AS HE HAD DONE IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY VEST IN JULY). HE DID NOT MENTION THE ASDM ISSUE AT ALL. ON THE ETS, THERE WAS ONLY A BRIEF EXCHANGE DURING WHICH THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR REITERATED OUR CONCERNS ABOUT THE BUNDESPOST POSITION. EBERHARD DID NOT CHALLENGE THE POINT.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 15426

6. THERE WAS ALSO A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF GEPARD, IN
WHICH EBERHARD RECALLED BUNDESTAG DEPUTY CARL DAMM'S
RECENT PROPOSALS. THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR SAID WE
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STILL HAD ALL THE RESERVATIONS ABOUT GEPARD WITH WHICH
EBERHARD WAS FAMILIAR. EBERHARD SAID HE DID, INDEED,
KNOW OF THESE OBJECTIONS BUT CARL DAMM KEPT RAISING THE
ISSUE BECAUSE VARIOUS NEW ELEMENTS WERE BEING
CONSIDERED (INCLUDING THE RECENT PROPOSALS TO HAVE
THEM PASSED TO ITALY AFTER AMERICAN USE). HOWEVER,
EBERHARD MADE NO LINK BETWEEN THE GEPARD AND AWACS.

7. COMMENT: THIS CONVERSATION REENFORCES OUR
JUDGMENT, ALREADY VIEWED IN REFTTEL, TO THE EFFECT THAT
THE TANK GUN REMAINS THE CRUCIAL LINK TO AWACS. WE
ARE NOT SURE HOW TO INTERPRET EBERHARD'S FAILURE TO

MENTION OTHER POINTS. WE ASSUME THAT, AS WE HAVE
INDICATED BEFORE, OTHER ISSUES ARE INDEED LESS DIRECTLY
LINKED BY THE POLITICAL ATTITUDES OF BUNDESTAG MEMBERS.
HOWEVER, WE CANNOT FORETELL, JUST AS EBERHARD
CANNOT FORETELL, WHAT SPECIFIC VIEWS
BUNDESTAG MEMBERS MAY EXPRESS WHEN THE ACTUAL AWACS
DISCUSSION BEGINS. THEREFORE, IT REMAINS OUR VIEW
THAT SOME PROGRESS ON OTHER ISSUES, OR AT LEAST AN
INDICATION THAT WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO MAKE PROGRESS
AS WE HAVE DONE ON ETS, WOULD IMPROVE THE PROSPECTS.
IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE IN THIS CONNECTION THAT WE ARE
NOT TALKING OF A FORMAL LINKAGE BUT SIMPLY OF THE
ALWAYS UNPREDICTABLE ATTITUDES THAT VARIOUS BUNDESTAG
MEMBERS MAY REFLECT AS THE DEBATE PROGRESSES.
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